

American Religious Diversity (R/ST 302I)

How to write the synthesis?

For some of the readings marked on the syllabus, you will write at least five pages. The first four pages and a half will be a restatement of the text's argument in your own words. You should write a summary with references indicating the pages summarized. The purpose of this section is to help you understand as fully as possible the structure and essential ideas of the author's argument. You should summarize the main points of the reading using your own words.

The second section in half a page is to be your own personal reflections to the readings. Analyze it, illustrate it through your own experience, refute it, get mad at it, question it, believe it, doubt it, go beyond it. I am looking for evidence of serious effort and engaged thought. Read carefully the course outline for other details about the synthesis.

Grading criteria

You will be graded for the structure, the clarity and the quality of arguments, your capacity to summarize essential ideas, and your critical thinking.

Objectives of the synthesis:

- a) to expose students to the pluralisms of culture, ethnic groups, and viewpoints which compose American society.
- b) to make students aware of the religious identity of some ethnic groups which exist in America as well as the religious diversity which exists across ethnic lines.
- c) be encouraged to think critically about some religion practiced in America
- d) understand how some world religions have been modified and adapted to the American context.

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How to write the play

The class will be divided into groups of four students. Each group will write a play inspired from a novel or a biography. The Professor will assign a specific book to your group.

Each member of the group should speak a minimum of five minutes and should say at least 400 words in the play. For example the play's length for a group of four should be 4×400 words = 1600 words. The play should not exceed 400 words per member. If there is only three members then the play length will be $3 \times 400 = 1200$ words.

The play must emphasize the moral content of the novel or biography and there must be a lesson to learn from it.

Grading criteria

I will give 70% for the structure, clarity and quality of the arguments showing that you understood the novel or biography and 30% for the mechanical elements of the paper (diction, grammar, bibliography indicating the complete reference of the novel (author, title, city, publisher, date), the students in their play must refer at least four times to the book indicating the author and the pages in parenthesis).

The objective of the play is to identify and understand in a deeper manner the viewpoints of one ethnic group.

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Presentation of the play

Students may present their play by acting it or they may choose to present the novel or biography in a lecture format. Students are encouraged to present their play with audio-visual means such as PowerPoint, overhead projector, etc. Students may wear costumes or bring various accessories. They may also pre-record their play in a video and present it in the classroom.

Each student in the group must talk approximately five minutes.

Grading criteria

I will give 70% for your capacity to express orally the essential ideas of the novel or biography and 30% for the way you will be able to make your presentation appealing and interesting for the auditors.

The objective of the presentation is to identify in a deeper manner to the viewpoints of one ethnic group and to develop oral skills.